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Manchester

Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Human Services Subcommittee. My name is Lurlette Newell, I live in Manchester, I am a Certified Nursing Assistant employed at Westside Care Center in Manchester. I am here today to urge you to fully fund nursing homes in Connecticut.

I became a Nurse's Aide over twenty years ago. I entered the field because of my grandmother who was very dear to me. I loved her tremendously, and cared for her in her final years. Through this experience it became apparent to me that I enjoyed caring for the elderly, so I decided to make caring for the elderly my career.

My job as a CNA has been very rewarding but it has changed drastically over the past twenty years. I am no longer able to sit with my residents when they need to talk, nor am I able to soak their feet, and care for them the way I want to take care of them. I am constantly running from one resident to another to get the basic care completed. My day consists of washing, dressing, and getting these residents out of their beds daily, things that we take for granted. Residents need to be toileted on a two hour schedule. I also have two meals to assist them with. Feeding can take up to twenty minutes per resident for the ones that need to be fed.

It is time that we realize that the nursing home of twenty years ago that cared for people who needed basic personal assistance has evolved into a complex clinical setting with individuals who require much more care and supervision than years past. Staffing levels must reflect the needs of the population we now care for. It is not uncommon to have a mix of residents: Alzheimer's, Behavioral, Substance abuse, and Alcohol Abuse residents coming from the hospital. Residents that were once cared for in a hospital setting are now being sent to the nursing home. Residents need our love and affection and we are not able to give this to them due to the lack of time with the current staffing levels. Connecticut residents living in a nursing home should be a priority to the Legislature of Connecticut.

We are asking you to fully fund nursing homes in the state so there is funding to raise the staffing standards for nursing homes to improve the lives of residents and caregivers. Our workload is twice what it was and we cannot give residents the level of care that they deserve. At this point, I can't keep doing this work. I was planning on staying in nursing homes for another few years, but sadly I will be another statistic of someone leaving this field. There are so many injuries at

work, and if I keep going I'll be crippled. Please help us to solve this crisis, and fully fund our nursing homes.

Thank you for your time.